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General and complete disarmament

Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/57, the annex to which contained the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World. The report reflects the efforts and initiatives undertaken by Member States to implement the Declaration since the adoption of the resolution.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/57, the annex to which contained the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World.

2. In paragraph 3 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of the Declaration.

II. Efforts to facilitate the implementation of the Universal Declaration

3. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration on the Achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, States have undertaken various efforts aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, including in the context of the following:

(a) The 2016, 2017 and 2018 sessions of the Disarmament Commission were held in New York and were chaired by Odo Tevi (Vanuatu), Gabriela Martinic (Argentina) and Gillian Bird (Australia), respectively. Procedural reports of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies were adopted at the three sessions. The reports reflected the fact that Working Group I had held extensive discussions on agenda item 4, Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Owing to divergent viewpoints, however, Member States were unable to reach consensus on substantive recommendations on the agenda item;

(b) During 2016, 2017 and 2018, States continued their efforts to return the Conference on Disarmament to work. At the initiative of the first President of the 2017 session of the Conference, Adrian Vierita (Romania), the Conference established a working group on the "way ahead" to identify common ground for a programme of work with a negotiating mandate (see CD/2090). The working group held meetings on all the agenda items of the Conference, including the four core issue agenda items: nuclear disarmament; a fissile material treaty; prevention of an arms race in outer space; and negative security assurances. Under the guidance of the first President of the 2018 session, Ravinatha Aryasinha (Sri Lanka), the Conference adopted decision CD/2119, in which it decided to establish five subsidiary bodies mandated:

(i) To reach an understanding on the areas of commonalities in the Conference by taking into consideration all relevant views and proposals past, present and future;

(ii) To deepen technical discussions and broaden areas of agreement, including through the participation, in accordance with the rules of procedure, of relevant experts;

(iii) To consider effective measures, including legal instruments for negotiations on each of the agenda items of the Conference.

By its decision CD/2126, and under the guidance of the third President of the 2018 session, Sabrina Dallafior (Switzerland), the Conference appointed Hasan Kleib (Indonesia) as the coordinator for subsidiary body 1, on the cessation of the arms race and nuclear disarmament; and Robert Jan Gabriëlse (Netherlands) as the coordinator for subsidiary body 2, on the prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters. The coordinators will submit a report on the progress achieved in each subsidiary

body to the Conference, through the President, for adoption and due reflection in the annual report of the Conference to the General Assembly;

(c) The first and second sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons were held in Vienna from 2 to 12 May 2017 and in Geneva from 23 April to 4 May 2018, respectively. The first session of the preparatory committee was chaired by Henk Cor van der Kwast (Netherlands), and the second by Adam Bugajski (Poland). Delegations at the two sessions were unable to agree on whether to attach the Chairs' summaries to the session reports. As a result, and in accordance with past practice, the Chairs submitted their summaries as working papers under their own responsibility. During the first and second sessions of the preparatory committee, delegations underlined the necessity of implementing the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference and the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the 2010 Review Conference, including the action plan. On other regional issues, many delegations condemned the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. During the second session, delegations cautiously welcomed dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America. Delegations expressed support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action reached between the Islamic Republic of Iran and E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America). During the second session, several delegations stressed the need for all parties to maintain their constructive engagement so as to ensure that progress was made towards the full implementation of the Plan;

4. Other initiatives that have been pursued as a means of contributing to the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons include the following:

(a) Meetings of the General Assembly to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons were held on 26 September 2016 and 2017. At the meeting held in 2016, the Secretary-General marked the occasion with a message in which he urged the international community to work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons with urgency and a sense of collective purpose. In his remarks at the meeting held in 2017, the Secretary-General highlighted that a world free of nuclear weapons was a global vision that required a global response;

(b) Meetings of the General Assembly to mark the observance of the International Day against Nuclear Tests were held on 31 August 2016 and 30 August 2017 at United Nations Headquarters. During the 2016 meeting, opening statements were delivered by the President of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, Mogens Lykketoft (Denmark), by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on behalf of the Secretary-General, as well as by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations. The opening ceremony was followed by a high-level interactive panel on the theme "Strengthening the global norm against nuclear tests". During the 2017 meeting, opening remarks were made by the President of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, Peter Thomson (Fiji), by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on behalf of the Secretary-General, and by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Roman Vassilenko. During both meetings, participants deliberated on current and emerging challenges, and on opportunities to strengthen the global norm against testing;

(c) On 13 June 2016, over 120 delegations attended the opening of the ministerial meeting held in Vienna to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The meeting brought together leaders and policymakers to address, review and reinvigorate the

discussion on the entry into force of the. On that occasion, ministers and other high-level participants renewed their commitment to a legally binding global ban on nuclear testing. In New York, on 21 September 2016, ministers for foreign affairs and other high-level representatives adopted a joint statement at the eighth ministerial meeting of the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The ministers reaffirmed the role of the Treaty as a core element of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and its entry into force as a major contribution to international peace and security. In New York, on 20 September 2017, at the tenth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty (article XIV conference), ministers for foreign affairs and other high-level representatives adopted the Final Declaration and Measures to Promote the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the declaration, participants reaffirmed the vital importance and urgency of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and urged the remaining eight Annex 2 States, whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, to sign and ratify it without further delay;

(d) The second and third substantive sessions of an open-ended working group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of a preparatory committee, of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (see resolution 65/66), were chaired by Fernando Luque Márquez (Ecuador) and were held from 11 to 15 July 2016 and from 5 to 9 June 2017, respectively. Delegations discussed a range of substantive issues related to the possible objectives and agenda of a fourth special session. At the third session, the Chair introduced a working paper entitled "Objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". The working group adopted, by consensus, the report and the recommendations contained therein regarding the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-second session;

(e) In its resolution 70/33, the General Assembly decided to convene an open-ended working group with a mandate to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that would need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. The first and second substantive sessions of the working group, chaired by Thani Thongphakdi (Thailand), were held in Geneva in February and May 2016. Member States, civil society and international organizations participated in both sessions. Following the first substantive session, the Chair submitted a synthesis paper reflecting the main points of discussion. During the second substantive session, further discussions were held on a range of elements considered important for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear weapon-free world;

(f) In 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/259, in which it requested the Secretary-General to establish a high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group that would convene in 2017 and 2018 to consider and make recommendations on substantial elements of a future non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of document CD/1299 and the mandate contained therein. The Assembly also requested the expert preparatory group to examine the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (A/70/81), established pursuant to Assembly resolution 67/53, with a view to making recommendations. Informal open-ended consultative meetings were convened in New York by the Chair of the preparatory group in March 2017 and February 2018. The consultative meetings were intended to allow all Member States to engage in interactive discussions and share their views. The expert preparatory

group concluded its second and last session in Geneva in and adopted, by consensus, a report that the Secretary General will transmit to the Assembly at its seventy-third session and to the Conference on Disarmament prior to its 2019 session;

(g) In 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/67, in which it requested the Secretary-General to establish a group of governmental experts, comprising up to 25 participants, to consider the role of verification in advancing nuclear disarmament, taking into account the report of the Secretary General on nuclear disarmament verification (A/72/304), in which he addressed the development and strengthening of practical and effective nuclear disarmament verification measures and the importance of such measures in achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. The first meeting of the group was held from 14 to 18 May 2018, with Knut Langeland (Norway) acting as Chair;

(h) On 7 July 2017, the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, convened pursuant to resolution 71/258, adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by a vote of 122 to 1 (Netherlands), with 1 abstention (Singapore). The Treaty opened for signature in New York on 20 September 2017 and will enter into force 90 days following the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification.

5. At a bilateral level, on 5 February 2018, the United States and the Russian Federation met the central limits of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms ("New START").

6. With the aim of contributing to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, the Secretary-General launched his disarmament agenda entitled "Securing our common future" in Geneva on 24 May 2018. The agenda provides an opportunity to revitalize joint efforts to create a safer and more secure world and an occasion to prove the significance of disarmament to preventing, mitigating and resolving conflicts. One of the core priorities of the agenda is the theme "Disarmament to save humanity", which is aimed at reducing and eliminating weapons of mass destruction, namely, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. During his presentation on the disarmament agenda, the Secretary-General reaffirmed his commitment to working towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and called on Member States to revitalize their pursuit of that goal without delay. As indicated in the agenda, the Secretary-General will redouble his efforts to re-energize nuclear disarmament discussions and will seek progress, together with Member States, in the following three areas: resuming dialogue and negotiations for nuclear arms control and disarmament; extending the norms against nuclear weapons and their proliferation; and preparing for a world free of nuclear weapons. The disarmament agenda also integrates disarmament into the priorities of the whole United Nations system, laying the foundations for new partnerships and greater collaboration between different parts of the organization and Governments, civil society, the private sector and others.